

**Abstract**

USDA identifies Indian reservation residents as an underserved audience. The Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP) of USDA/NIFA supports Cooperative Extension on Indian reservations to address the unique needs of reservation residents. Emphasis is on assisting Native Americans in development of profitable farming and ranching techniques, providing 4-H and youth development experiences, and assisting American Indians in the development of profitable farming and ranching enterprises. The program began with 1990 Farm Bill to enhance access to Native Americans with the programs of the land grant universities. Areas with large Native American populations were underrepresented compared with agricultural, youth, community economic development opportunities that Extension programs provided to the rest of the population. Currently there are 36 projects in 19 states.

Many reservations are still not served. The program has seen decreasing budgets rather than expansion, allowing impacts to be measured as culturally sensitive and funded programs. Remote areas, barriers in culture, economics and community structure make it difficult to fully integrate Extension programs to reach the needs of native people. National Agriculture Statistics Service 2007 Census attempted to accurately measure Native American agriculture; the results showed dramatic increases in the number of Navajo Nation producers, for example in Arizona the change was from 291 in 2002 to 8,436 in 2007.

**GOALS OF THE FRTEP PROGRAM**

The Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP) supports extension agents on American Indian reservations and tribal jurisdictions to address the unique needs and problems of American Indian tribes. Emphasis is placed on assisting American Indians in the development of profitable farming and ranching techniques, providing 4-H and youth development experiences for tribal youth, and providing education and outreach on tribally-identified priorities (e.g., family, resource management, and non-ten) using a culturally sensitive approach. Our poster displays the key objectives, challenges, opportunities and successes of this program, while providing some overview to the needs for the future delivery and a more equal access to important services that Cooperative Extension can provide. The Tribal Land Grant collaborative is also addressing tribal needs.

**EQUITY IN SERVICES**

In 2007, the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) compiled data on the number of American Indian food producers. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducted the first comprehensive survey of Indian agriculture ever done. The results of the census showed an 88 percent increase in the number of American Indian farmers (79,703 more than in 2002). Prior to the 1990 Farm Bill each reservation was counted as one farm and USDA funding is based on the number of farms in a state. States with large Indian population such as Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma have been underestimated and underfunded. The NASS Census of Agriculture finally revealed what the numbers are.

**Farm Bill**

Every time the Farm Bill comes before Congress, organizations representing tribal and rural interests argue for increase in funding for Native American programs. In its June 10, 2009 testimony before House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Rural Development, Biotechnology, Specialty Crops and Foreign Agriculture, Governor Chandler Sanchez on behalf of the Pueblo of Acoma and the National Congress of American Indians stated the following:

> “Congress mandates and funds research and extension services in every county in the nation except on Indian reservations. The Extension Indian Reservation Program (ERIP) must be expanded to provide access, education and training to Tribes, including Reservations, Native Villages, and Tribal colleges. This program provides the only federal source of funding to cover the cost of placing extension agents on Indian reservations. Only 27 reservations have ERIP programs, which is only 5% of all Tribal Reservations. ERIP direct extension agents are placed to be in areas where there has been a need demonstrated. I hope we have sufficiently demonstrated ‘need’ today and respectfully request the Committee to ask the USDA about the progress on ERIP expansion.”

Currently funded under the NIFA budget, the USDA’s program has seen no increases in six years. FRTEP is a competitive grant program, and long-term goals to build sustainable communities are hampered by rolling staff, underfunded for population size, and other factors. In contrast, unique to the Extension program, but unequal in outreach efforts to other similar programs funding, Extension programs on five Indian reservations in Arizona and New Mexico.

**FARM Bill**

Funding for 2010 went to 63 projects on 24 reservations in 21 states nationwide.

**FRTEP - Examples of Accomplishments**

**Approach**

Agents have found that the most successful approach to achieve successful programs with native people is to LISTEN. To listen to what people talk about, learn about programs are, and what they hear is desire for the future, agents have learned about the local needs. Programs are offered with sensitivity and awareness of culture. Respect is given to local values, history, tradition, men’s and women’s roles, traditional foods, language, traditional arts and crafts, natural resources, community pride, children, and family.

**Pine Ridge, South Dakota**

Project director Sherburne Burke has worked to develop partnerships and relationships to expand opportunities and leverage resources. Producer outreach has included an ag-stewardship index with late fall trainings for over 100 community members and agency representatives and periodic workshops on range management. As a result of these efforts Agent Burke received a three year grant from the USDA Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program to expand training for new producers in livestock and vegetable production. So far over 100 new producers have received training in agricultural production, marketing and financial management.

**Hiring Native Staff**

Many FRTEP Extension programs have hired Native American staff as agents and program educators. In California Holly Hasenauer, a member of the Karuk tribe, brings her experience to FRTEP as a gifted artisan and her 12 years as tribal program director. She serves as the QA’s tribal liaison as well.

**Publications on Indian Country Outreach**


**4-H Youth Development Programs**

UC Extension Agent Deborah Giraud collaborates with a charter school in Klamath, Spanish Flat. In the last year Deborah has worked with 4-H youth on environmental literacy, soil science, preparation and goal setting.

**FRTEP Agents help connect University & USDA faculty and Researchers to reservations to address research area of interest to tribes such as the above Canola Plots with USDA ARS & WSU on the Colville Reservation.**

**Biotic project**

Landscape Improvements to Grasslands.

**Extension Efforts:**

1. Each FRTEP office adapts and creates research based educational materials to meet the needs of reservation audiences. These can range from publications to programs to the number of reservations.

2. Educational workshops are conducted by FRTEP educators in local communities on topics such as gardening, vaccinating cattle, and safe food preservation.

3. Land grant university based researchers and faculty are engaged to provide additional knowledge base to educational outreach efforts.

4. Youth are recruited and enrolled in the life skill building 4-H Youth Development Programs conducted by USDA in partnership with Land Grant Universities and USDA.

5. Human and community capacity building with-in the reservations they work and live in is an important goal of the FRTEP Agents.